



# Foster Family Gap Analysis

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# Foster Family Gap Analysis

## Executive Summary

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### OVERVIEW

In 2014, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation supported the creation and growth of the Travis County Collaborative for Children. With this investment, the Dell Family Foundation is helping children in foster care in Travis County heal and move to permanent, safe and loving families. As the Dell Family Foundation looks toward the future, they wish to expand the impact of their grant dollars on improving outcomes for children in the child welfare system in Central Texas.

Increasing the number of high-quality foster families is a key leverage point that organizations across the country have identified as being vital to improving outcomes for children. The purpose of this project is to collect information on the needs and challenges associated with placing foster children in Central Texas that can then be used to inform a targeted, collaborative recruitment effort.<sup>1</sup>

The specific questions we investigated during this process included:

- What challenges do the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and child placing agencies have in placing Travis County children with foster families within Travis County (including availability of families and wrap-around support services)?
- What does data from the child welfare system tell us about children that are hard to place within the county and children who experience multiple disruptions in placements?
- What types of foster families are needed to care for children who are hard to place in Travis County to ensure they have a safe and healing environment? Are there communities, affiliations or associations that can be targeted for recruiting these families?
- What existing marketing or recruitment initiatives are Travis County organizations engaged in that are related to improving public perception or increasing positive adult involvement in the foster care system?
- What additional capacity or partnerships will organizations need to ensure they have the targeted recruitment and vetting process in place to handle and make use of additional inquiries?

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis focuses on non-kinship foster families only.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Challenges Placing Children With Foster Families in or Near Travis County

Capacity constraints, especially for certain types of children, result in almost 30% of children in foster care being placed beyond the boundaries of Travis and the contiguous counties. Key factors affecting placement options include:

- **There are not enough available foster families.** There are currently an insufficient number of foster families in Travis County to care for children in need of a home. While looking beyond the county boundaries to homes available in contiguous counties expands the capacity somewhat, even this number over-represents the number of actual beds available. Two complicating factors that impact the number of beds that are actually available versus those reported as licensed include:
  - Beds that are filled by biological children must be licensed in addition to beds available for foster children.
  - Child placing agencies encourage families to pursue a higher licensed bed count than they may initially be interested in to allow the family the flexibility to expand the number of children in the home without repeating the licensure process.

Based on data we collected from child placing agencies comparing licensed versus actual bed capacity, we determined that on average, **only 52% of licensed beds were truly available for placement.**

- **Children placed in Travis County from other parts of the state are adding to capacity issues.** Although DFPS prioritizes placing children close to home, often the only beds available are outside a child's home county. According to the DFPS data report from March 2016, 226 children from outside Travis and the contiguous counties were placed within Travis County. Of these, 84 were placed in contracted foster homes, making bed availability even more limited for children in Central Texas. Although Travis County remains a net exporter of foster children, reducing the number of children placed in Central Texas from other areas would allow some additional capacity to bring children closer to home.
- **Lack of opportunities to personally connect kids with potential families makes it less likely families say "yes" to fostering more challenging children.** Fostering children is a challenging and relational experience. Currently, the way child placing is done in Travis County and Texas at large is more of a transactional approach that may create barriers to finding a family that can take care of a child's complex needs, especially those of the harder to place children. The state of Texas utilizes a Centralized Placement Unit to place children with families. A common application of the child is completed, and it is this application that is sent to child placing agencies to seek out an appropriate foster home. There are concerns that the application highlights a child's problematic behaviors without putting it in the context of what might have triggered or set off a response. In addition, there is little opportunity for the Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworker who has been working with the child to meet with a new foster family before the placement is made.
- **A lack of emergency placement options results in children spending the night in offices, hotels or extended stays in hospitals.** A challenge for CPS and child placing agencies is finding foster homes in Travis and the contiguous counties that are willing to

accept children for immediate, emergency placements. Our analysis of DFPS data revealed that at the end of March 2016, more than 50% of children who were in an emergency shelter were placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties.

Additionally, according to a March 23, 2016 opinion piece by Judge Darlene Byrne in the Austin American-Statesman, over the past year in Travis County, more than 30 children have slept in CPS offices due to having no other placement options. Court representatives, as well as caseworkers, indicate that a large percentage of the children who do not have appropriate emergency placements are children with specialized needs, in permanent managed conservatorship or require higher levels of care.

Although there are foster families in Travis County that agree to accept children who are in need of an immediate placement, Texas does not have a specific category of emergency placement homes that can be accessed directly by caseworkers or child placing unit staff looking for immediate, short-term placements.

- **Negative perceptions of foster care and the child welfare system prevent some prospective families from fostering.** During conversations with child placing agency and DFPS staff, several stakeholders noted the importance of providing prospective foster families with a realistic understanding of foster care. There are many myths circulating about foster care and negative portrayals in the media. In fact, a national survey of foster parents and child welfare agency staff found that a top barrier to recruiting foster parents was negative public perceptions of fostering (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).
- **Lack of transportation assistance and other community support services creates an undue burden on some families interested in fostering.** DFPS and community stakeholders identified a number of community-wide gaps in services and supports to foster families. Most significant was a lack of support for transporting children. Children in care must frequently be transported to regular court-ordered visits to their biological families. The sheer number of these visits can be a major challenge for families, particularly working parents. Some prospective foster parents are forced to say no to having a child placed in their home due to a lack of assistance in this area. For existing foster families, the transportation challenge can be a significant source of stress and may result in families who are unable to continue serving as foster parents.

In addition to transportation assistance, other needed community support services include respite care, behavioral and mental health services, and parent training.

## Characteristics of “Hard-to-Place” Children

While there is a need to increase the number of available beds for foster children in general, there are certain characteristics of children who are more likely to be placed further from home that should be considered when recruiting families:

- Through the use of DFPS child-level data we learned that the children and youth most often placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties include:
  - 42% of older youth and adolescents (ages 12 and above)
  - More than 50% of children with specialized and intense levels of care
  - 60% of children in residential treatment centers
  - 50% of children in emergency shelters

The analysis did not reveal any differences in placement inside or outside of Travis County as a result of gender or ethnicity.

Survey data from child placing agencies also confirmed difficulties in finding placements for teenagers, as well as those with specialized needs (and consequently a higher level of care) including children with:

- Primary medical needs
- Developmental delay/low IQ
- Pregnant/parenting teens
- Previous major incidents (e.g., fire-setting, sexual perpetration)
- Previous psychiatric hospitalizations

## Types of Foster Families Needed to Care for Children

To create a healing environment for children in foster care, families need to demonstrate certain abilities and interests, specifically:

- **Families who can commit to fostering “hard-to-place” children.** As we noted above, data from DFPS and child placing agencies indicate there is currently a lack of families within Travis and the contiguous counties who are willing to foster adolescents, children in higher levels of care, and children with specialized needs. Data from DFPS also revealed that children who require higher levels of care were twice as likely to have experienced more than two placements during their time in care, compared to children in basic care.
- **Families who can commit to long-term care if needed.** The DFPS data analysis revealed that the greatest predictor of placement instability is time in care, with a significant jump in the percent of children with three or more placements after 18-24 months in care.<sup>2</sup> The community needs families who will be able to commit to caring for a child for “as long as it takes” until the child returns to their biological family or is adopted. While many of these children require moderate, specialized and intense levels of care, nearly 20% of kids placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties are children in need of basic care.
- **Families who are interested in foster-only placements.** Several child placing agencies noted that the majority of the families they work with are adoption motivated. While there continues to be a need for adoptive families, child placing agencies are also seeking out families who are willing to foster-only and support children and their biological families in reunification efforts.
- **Families who are willing to accept emergency placements.** Data from DFPS indicates that more than 50% of children who were placed in emergency shelters were placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties. In addition, stakeholders indicate it is increasingly common for children to have to stay at CPS offices or in a hotel due to a lack of available placements in their community.
- **High-quality foster families who are motivated to make an impact.** The most “successful” foster families often state they are “called” to their work and possess a strong desire to help heal children and create a long-term impact. These families also

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<sup>2</sup> The US Department of Health and Human Services defines placement stability as two or fewer placements.

possess critical parenting qualities that are necessary to successfully care for children who have experienced significant challenges and trauma, including:

- Open minded, tolerant
- Flexible, easy going
- Organized, consistent
- Persistent, committed
- Thick-skinned, able to cope with challenging behaviors
- Empathy for the child (understanding how much the child has gone through) and the biological family
- Valuing diversity, supporting cultural needs, and understanding cultural bias and the role it plays in working with children in foster care

## Communities to Target for Foster Family Recruitment

Recruitment of foster families has been a challenge for DFPS and child placing agencies in Central Texas. Based on research and success experienced in other parts of the state and the country, there are some under-accessed resources for recruitment that should be considered, including:

- **Engage the faith-based community.** A number of stakeholders we spoke with emphasized the importance of engaging with faith-based organizations as part of a targeted, collaborative recruitment effort. These comments echo national experts who view faith communities as ideal places to recruit foster families, given the emphasis on helping others as part of the ministry of the community (Casey Family Programs, 2014). National studies also indicate that those individuals connected to a faith community are more likely to respond and follow-through as foster parents.
- **Engage with current foster families.** A national survey of child welfare workers found that word-of-mouth recruitment by current foster parents is the best way to recruit new foster families (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). In addition, studies have found that foster parents recruited by other foster parents are more likely to complete training and become licensed (New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 2015).
- **Engage with families of color.** The 1994 Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) requires states to recruit foster homes that reflect the diversity of children in need of care. While federal law prohibits agencies to slow time to placement in order to match a child with families of similar race or ethnicity, a number of targeted recruitment initiatives across the country are being used to recruit families that reflect racial and ethnic diversity. This may be particularly important to a recruitment initiative here in Travis County, given the disproportionate number of African American children in the child welfare system (23%) as compared with the general African American population in the county (8.3%).

## Existing Marketing and Recruitment Initiatives

We have identified a number of existing marketing and recruiting initiatives, both within Travis County and across the state, that are working to recruit new foster and adoptive families, as well as improve public perception and increase community involvement. These initiatives include:

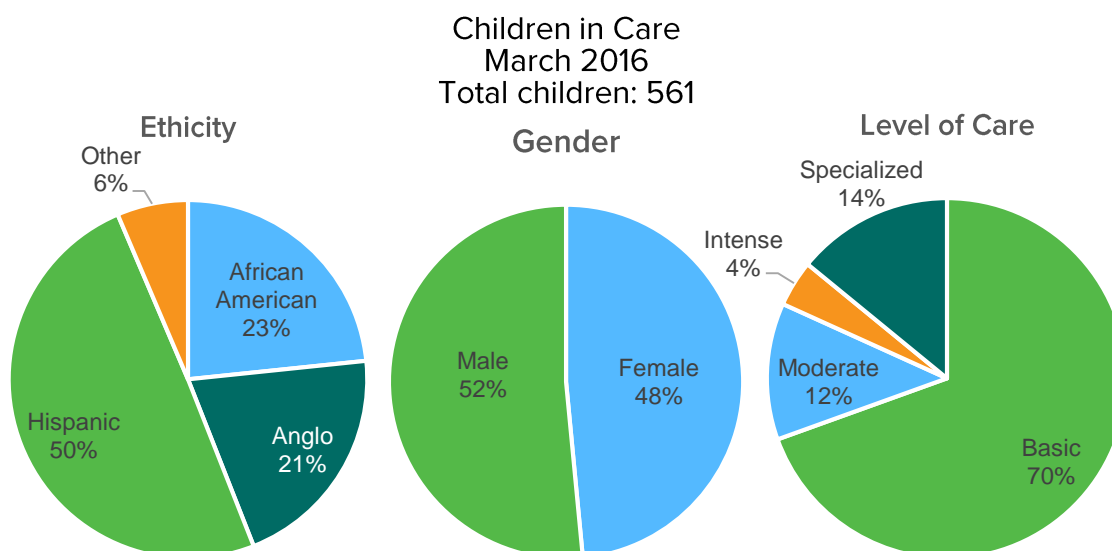
- Partnerships for Children - Orientation Training
- Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment - Consumer Analytics
- Fostering Hope Austin
- Our Community, Our Kids - Palo Pinto County Initiative
- CarePortal
- DFPS, Region 7 - Placement Recruitment Collaborative
- Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiters

During the next phase of this project, existing initiatives will be leveraged to develop a targeted, collaborative recruitment effort.

## DFPS Child-Level Data

Child-level data was acquired through a data sharing agreement with the Department of Family and Protective Services. The primary question we wanted to answer was whether there are particular groups of children who were placed beyond the boundaries of Travis and the contiguous counties<sup>3</sup>. Point-in-time information was reviewed for children in substitute care from Travis County at the end of September 2015 and again at the end of March 2016. Kinship placements were not included in the analysis.

At the end of September 2015 there were 602 children from Travis County in substitute care, not including kinship placements. At the end of March 2016, this number had dropped to 561. At both points, approximately 50% of the children were girls and 50% were boys, and the ethnic makeup remained relatively constant, with a disproportionate number of African American children in the system as compared with the general child population in the county (8.3% African American according to the Austin/Travis County 2012 Community Health Assessment.)



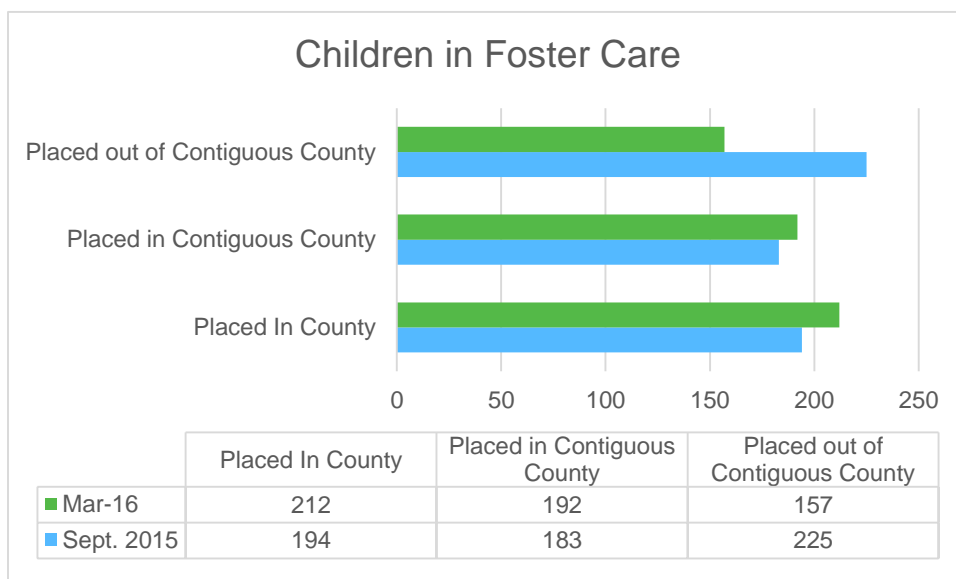
<sup>3</sup> Counties contiguous to Travis include Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Hays and Williamson. For the purpose of this report, we may also refer to this region as “Central Texas.”

Although there are many factors to consider when identifying placement priorities for children in care, for purposes of this analysis we focused on those that may impact a child's ability to be placed close to home. Because exact geographic information was limited to county, "close to home" is defined as a placement in Travis or a contiguous county.

## KEEPING CHILDREN CLOSER TO HOME

While the number and percentage of children placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties decreased during the analyzed time frame (September 2015 to March 2016), almost 30% of children in foster care were still placed beyond the boundaries of the contiguous counties.<sup>4</sup>

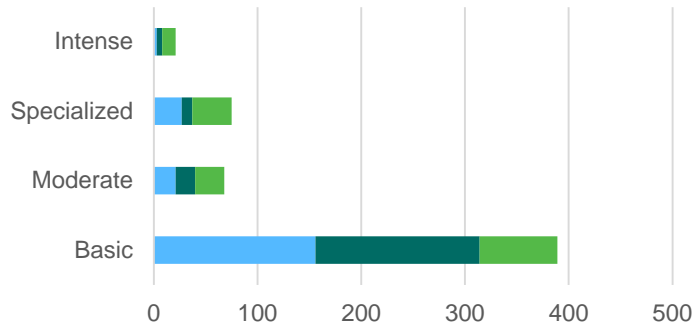
Analysis revealed a number of differences among children who are placed farther away from home which affects our thinking about expanding Travis County's capacity to keep children close to home.



- More than **50% of the 28 children placed in emergency shelters** were placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties
- More than **60% of the 55 children placed in residential treatment centers** were placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers include children in homes that are intended to be their permanent placement. If these placements are removed from the analysis, 28% are placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties.

### Level of Care



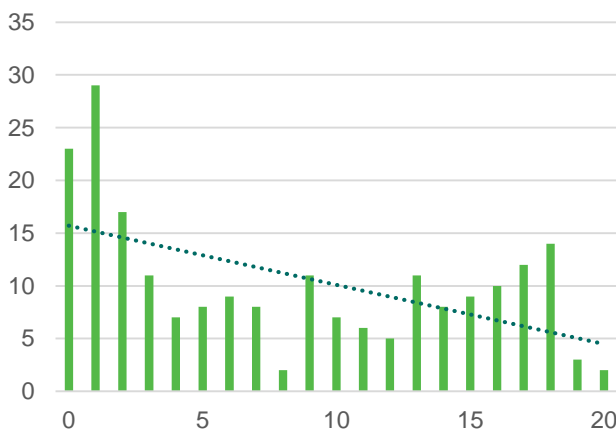
- The more intense the level of care required, the greater the likelihood that a child is placed out of Travis and the contiguous counties. The following percentages represent the placements outside of Travis and the contiguous counties:

- 19% of basic
- 41% of moderate
- 51% of specialized
- 62% of intense

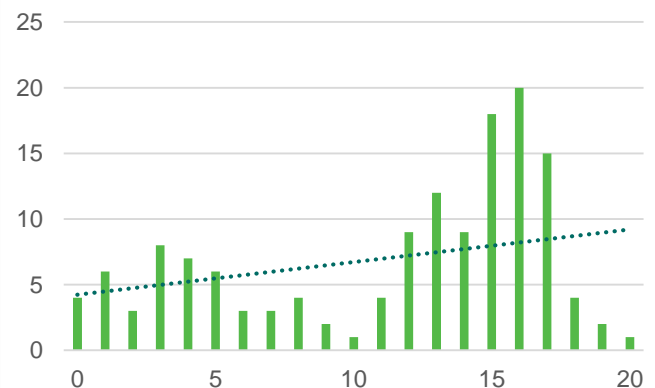
	Basic	Moderate	Specialized	Intense
■ Placed In County	156	21	27	3
■ Placed in Contiguous County	158	19	10	5
■ Placed out of Contiguous County	75	28	38	13

- Older children are more likely to be placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties, both as indicated by average age and median age, while younger children are more likely to be placed in a county contiguous to Travis. At the end of March 2016, there were 191 youth age 12 and up in the care of Travis County.
  - 43% of older children (ages 12 and up) were placed outside of the contiguous counties.
  - Of those, 56% were placed in basic or moderate levels of care.

### Placed In County, By Age



### Placed Beyond Contiguous Counties, By Age



### Average and Median Age of Children in Care

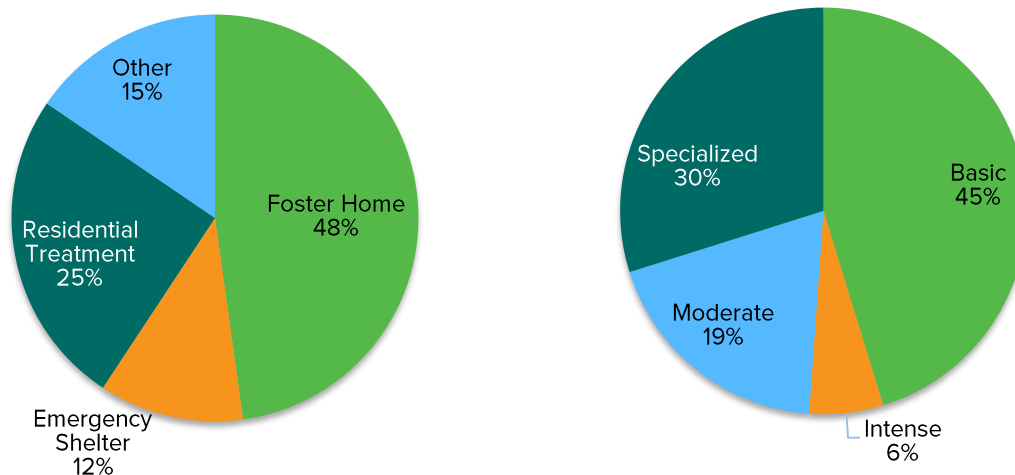
	September 2015	March 2016
Placement in County	Average: 8.1 Median: 6.3	Average: 8.4 Median: 7.2
Placement in Contiguous County	Average: 5.6 Median: 3.7	Average: 5.5 Median: 3.7
Placement out of Contiguous County	Average: 11.8 Median: 13.8	Average: 10.7 Median: 12.6

- The **gender and ethnic breakdown** of children placed in the county and those placed beyond the contiguous counties was **not appreciably different**.

### PLACEMENTS IN TRAVIS COUNTY FROM OUTSIDE CENTRAL TEXAS

Although DFPS prioritizes placing children close to home, often the only beds available are outside a child's home county. According to the DFPS data report from March 2016, **226 children from outside Travis and the contiguous counties were placed within Travis County**. Of these, 84 were placed in contracted foster homes, making beds available for Central Texas children even more limited.

March 2016  
Total children: 226

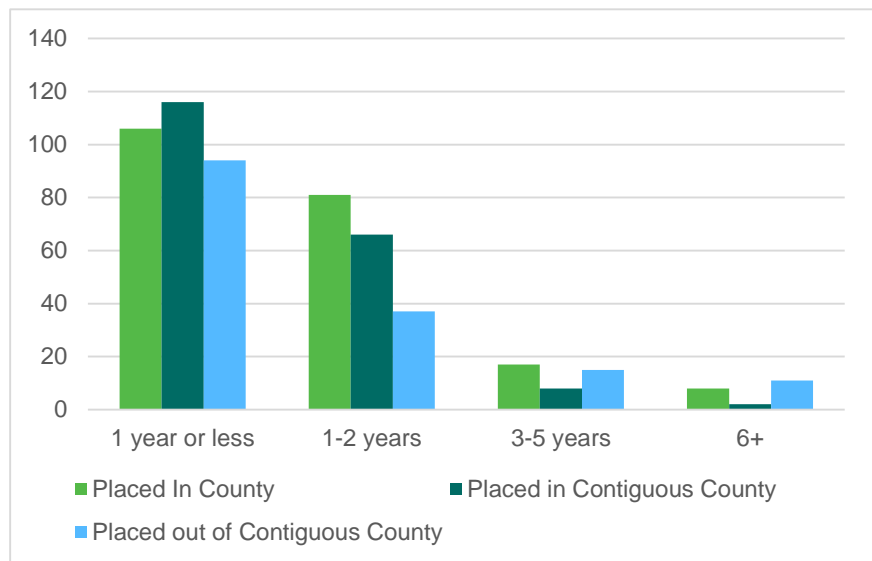


### CORRELATIONS BETWEEN OUTCOMES AND PROXIMITY TO PLACE OF REMOVAL

Placement proximity is important in order to minimize disruption and trauma to children in foster care. This is especially true for children who are expected to be reunified with their family of origin. Our data indicates that there are two factors correlated with being placed further from home is time in care and number of placements: time in care and number of placements.

## Time in Care

- 11% of children in care at the end of March 2016 had been in care three or more years.
- Of these children, 42% were placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties.
- Of the children who have been in care six or more years, more than half were placed outside of the contiguous counties.



## Number of Placements

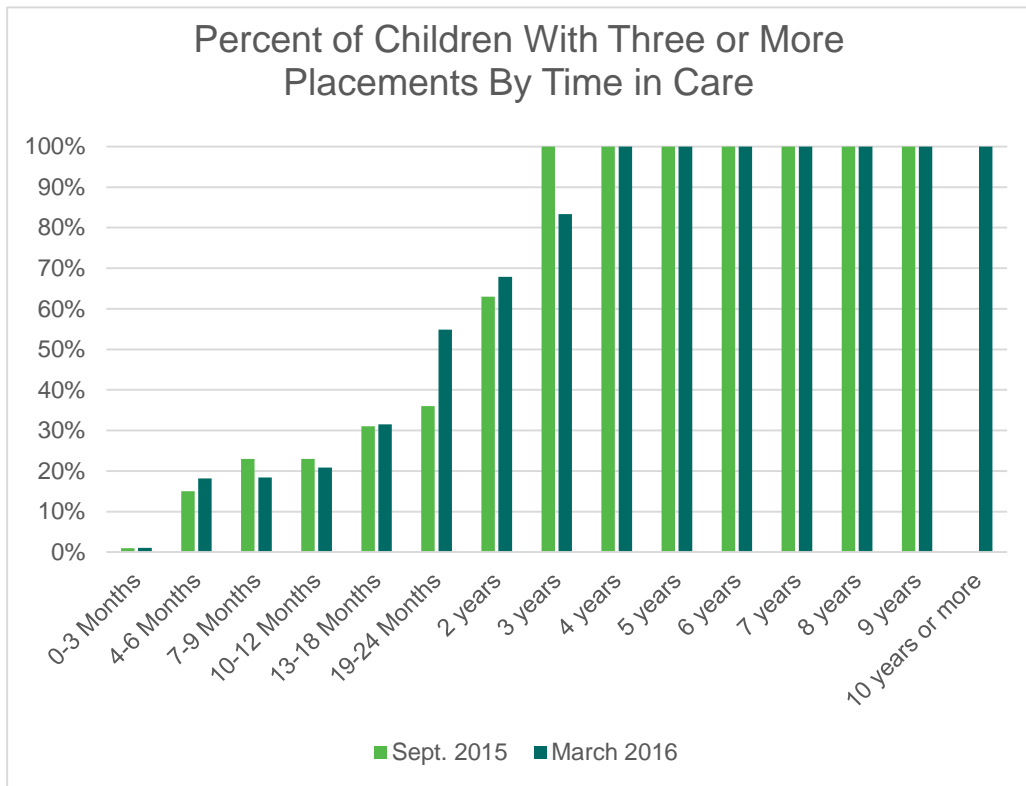
	September 2015	March 2016
Placement in County	2.0	2.0
Placement in Contiguous County	1.9	1.9
Placement out of Contiguous County	3.4	3.2

- On average, children placed outside of the contiguous county area experienced 60-79% more disruptions than children placed in Travis and the contiguous counties.

In addition to proximity of placement, other child characteristics were reviewed to see if there were additional correlations to increased number of placements:

- Males and females equally represented between 30% and 40% of children who had experienced three or more disruptions.
- Children in moderate and higher levels of care were twice as likely to have experienced three or more placements. -
- The greatest predictor of larger number of placements is time in care, with a significant jump in the percentage of children with three or more placements after 18-24 months in care.

Level of Care	Percent of children with 3 or more placements	
	Sept. 2015	March 2016
Basic	23%	24%
Moderate	56%	68%
Specialized	52%	60%
Intense	59%	81%



## Findings From Child Placing Agency Survey

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### BACKGROUND

As part of the foster family gap analysis, we asked child placing agencies serving Travis and the contiguous counties to complete a survey in order to gather information on the number of beds available for foster children, as well as the challenges agencies face in finding placements. Eleven child placing agencies participated in the survey.<sup>5</sup>

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Below are key findings from the data collected and the feedback received from this select group of child placing agencies.

#### Types of Licensed Homes

- **Specialized and intense service levels.** Our data reveals that homes licensed for basic and moderate service levels make up approximately 82.3% of foster homes in Travis and the contiguous counties, whereas specialized and intense service level homes only account for 17.7%.

#### Bed Capacity

- **Licensed versus actual beds.** The number of actual beds open and ready for placement is significantly less than the number of licensed beds. When comparing the total number of licensed beds to the total number of actual beds among survey respondents, **only 52% of licensed beds were truly available for placement.**

#### Bilingual Families

- **Spanish-speaking homes.** Child placing agencies report that an average of 9.2% of their licensed families speak Spanish, with the highest capacity indicated as 20%. With Hispanic children contributing to a substantial portion of the ethnic makeup of the child welfare system, the necessity for more Spanish-speaking homes is evident to meet the need of cultural familiarity and comfort for children who may not speak English. Additional interviews revealed that finding linguistically-competent families to care for children is a significant challenge, and one that directly effects a child's ability to integrate successfully into a foster home.

#### Placement Refusals for Agencies and Families

- The top four characteristics of children in care that child placing agencies reported they are unable to accept for placement included:
  - Primary medical needs (as defined by the state) – 45.5%
  - Development delays/low IQ – 18.2%
  - Previous major incidents (e.g. fire-setting; felony charges; sexual perpetration) – 9.1%
  - History of drug use – 9.1%

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<sup>5</sup> 11 out of 24 total child placing agencies in Travis and the contiguous counties (Williamson, Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Blanco, Burnet) participated in the survey – approximately 46% participation rate. Responses related to bed capacity were included for only 10 of the respondents due to incomplete information.

- When asked what were common reasons for families with an available and appropriate bed not accepting a child for placement, the responses included (0-3 scale, with 3 being very common and 0 being never):
  - Previous major incidents (e.g., fire-setting, sexual perpetration) – 2.82
  - Primary medical needs – 2.5
  - Pregnant or parenting youth – 2.4
  - Previous psychiatric hospitalization – 2.36
  - Age of child (13+) – 2.0

## Findings from Literature, Research and Stakeholder Interviews

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As part of this gap analysis, we conducted interviews with community stakeholders, DFPS and child placing agency staff, as well as reviewed the available literature and research in order to learn more about:

- Characteristics of hard-to-place children
- Challenges associated with placement
- Characteristics of high-quality foster families
- Promising practices related to targeted recruitment efforts
- Critical community resources necessary to support foster families
- Existing initiatives and potential partners

### HARD-TO-PLACE CHILDREN

Through the use of DFPS child-level data and the child placing agency survey, we learned that the children and youth most often placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties include:

- Older youth and adolescents
- Children with specialized and intensive levels of care
- Children needing residential treatment services
- Children needing emergency shelters

Interviews also confirmed that teenagers and children with special needs or primary medical needs often must be placed outside of the county due to a lack of available foster homes. While DFPS data did not indicate that sibling groups were more likely to be placed outside the county, there appears to be a **lack of available homes for sibling groups who should remain together**—both within and outside the county.

Our findings from Central Texas are in line with national data which has found that the most difficult to place children include (Office of Inspector General, 2002):

- Adolescents with psychological or mental disabilities
- Adolescents in general
- Sibling groups

- Children with behavioral challenges

A review of DFPS child-level data also revealed that **African American children are disproportionality represented in the Travis County child welfare system**, even though they're not more likely to be placed out of Travis and the contiguous counties compared to other racial and ethnic groups. Likewise, a review of the statewide data revealed that **African American children are disproportionately represented in foster care**. Specifically, the data indicates:

- African American compose 11% of the population yet African American children represented 19.5% of the children removed from their homes in fiscal year 2015 and 20.7% of the children awaiting adoption at the end of the year.

## NEED FOR EMERGENCY PLACEMENTS

Children coming in the foster care system often need a placement change due to an emergency situation. Current options to respond to this type of need include:

- Placing the child in an emergency shelter or group home in Travis County that accepts emergency placements
- Placing the child in an emergency shelter further away
- Finding a foster home that is willing to accept immediate placements
- Having them in a less than optimal placement including:
  - Longer than necessary psychiatric hospital or shelter stay
  - CPS supervised hotel rooms
  - Sleeping in the CPS offices

Based on data compiled by the Travis County District Courts, over a three-month period ending in June 2016, **more than 38 Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) children ages 11-17 had been placed at an emergency shelter.**<sup>6</sup> Of these children:

- 68% had been placed at an emergency shelter for longer than 60 days and one spent 193 days there.
- 37% had multiple placements at an emergency shelter.
- 29% were between the ages of 11 and 14
- A child's level of care was equally represented in the shelters. Of the 38 PMC children,
  - 29% needed basic level of care.
  - 24% needed moderate level of care.
  - 18% needed specialized level of care.
  - 29% needed intense level of care.

The court record review also revealed that of the **30 children admitted to a psychiatric hospital** during the same three-month period, 83% were admitted for longer than 14 days and almost half were admitted multiple times.

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<sup>6</sup> Information on children ages 0-10 placed in emergency shelters was not available at the time of this report.

- Children needing specialized level of care were the most represented in psychiatric hospital admissions, but not by much:
  - 30% needed basic or moderate level of care
  - 30% needed intense level of care
  - 40% needed specialized level of care

According to a March 23, 2016 opinion piece by Judge Darlene Byrne in the Austin American-Statesman, over the past year in Travis County, **more than 30 children have slept in CPS offices due to having no other placement options.** Court representatives, as well as caseworkers, indicate that a large percentage of children in less than optimal emergency placements are children with specialized needs, in permanent managed conservatorship or require higher levels of care.

The Travis County Child Welfare Board is responding to this issue and working with partner organizations to make sure the needs of children and their caseworkers are met in the event a child does have to be placed in a hotel, or as a last result, in CPS offices.

Although there are foster families in Travis County that agree to accept children who are in need of an immediate placement, Texas does not have a specific category of emergency placement homes that can be accessed directly by caseworkers in need of immediate, short-term placements. Some states, including Pennsylvania and California, license “stand-by” or “emergency” families that accept any child referred to them and provide care for a time-limited basis until an evaluation of the child can be completed and a good and appropriate placement can be found.

## NEED TO PLACE CHILDREN CLOSE TO HOME

Many national child welfare experts as well as local stakeholders stress the need for developing a foster care network that is neighborhood- and community-based. The Children’s Bureau notes, “Keeping children within their own community and relying on the community for services and support has been a part of good child welfare practice for decades.” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2009). In addition, one of the primary quality indicators of Foster Care Redesign in the state of Texas is that children and youth will be placed in their home communities. Keeping children and youth close to home is critical in order to help ensure:

- **Stability.** When children are placed hundreds of miles away from home, they are uprooted from everyone and everything they know in their lives. When possible, it is critical that the connections that children have to family, friends and school be maintained to the extent possible.
- **Access to biological family.** When it is in a child’s best interest, family reunification is a key goal for children in care. Keeping children in their home communities is critical in order to ensure children have regular access to visits from their biological families.
- **Access to caseworker and services.** When children are placed far from home, it also makes regular contact with their caseworker more challenging. In addition, the types of community and support services that are available within Travis County are often lacking when children are placed in more rural areas of the state.

## CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH CONNECTING KIDS WITH FAMILIES

Fostering children is a challenging and relational experience. Currently, the way child placing is done in Travis County and Texas at large is a transactional approach that may create barriers to finding a family that can take care of their complex needs, especially those of harder-to-place children. The state of Texas utilizes a Centralized Placement Unit to find homes for children in care. A common application of the child is completed, and it is this application that is sent to child placing agencies. One concern is that it highlights a child's problematic behaviors without context of what might have triggered a response. As a result, placement options are generally very limited, in many cases only one home identified for a child. Since CPS caseworkers don't have the opportunity to speak with foster families or child placing agencies about the individual child to facilitate a successful match, the common application is the single most important driver of placement decisions. One idea proposed by CPS caseworkers to address this challenge would be to create opportunities for foster family "match parties" where caseworkers can directly interact with families and child placing agencies in order to provide more specific information on kids in need of placement.

## NEED FOR PLACEMENT STABILITY

The analysis of child-level data from DFPS revealed that children placed outside of Travis and the contiguous counties had experienced on average 3.2 placements. Placement stability is one of seven key child welfare outcomes that the US Department of Health and Human Services regularly tracks, with placement stability defined as two or fewer placements (2013).<sup>7</sup>

Recent studies have found that placement instability influences child-level outcomes, including academic performance and social and emotional difficulties such as aggression. Specifically, research has found that (Policy Lab, 2009):

- While higher risk children with behavioral problems did experience more instability than lower risk children, **multiple placements, in fact, increased behavioral problems** among lower risk children by 50%.
- Regardless of a child's prior behavioral problems, age, or child welfare history, **children with a history of unstable placements had more behavioral problems**, while those who had achieved stability within 45 days of entry into the system consistently had fewer behavioral problems.

## NEED FOR HIGH-QUALITY FOSTER FAMILIES

A critical component of a successful targeted recruitment initiative includes engaging with potential foster parents who will have the ability to provide high-quality care and support to children. But what are the qualities of successful foster families that we should be seeking? What specific motivations drive these families to become foster parents?

Through a review of the available literature and interviews with key stakeholders, we have built a profile of those individuals who are most likely to become high-quality foster parents.

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<sup>7</sup> The count of placement settings does not include temporary stays in hospitals, camps, respite care or institutional placements.

## Qualities of Successful Foster Families

Key qualities include (Randle, 2013; Child Welfare Initiative, 2013; Berrick, et al., 2011):

- Open minded, tolerant
- Accepting of the child's background
- Realize the impact of trauma, including how it can emotionally, behaviorally and physically affect children
- Flexible, easy going
- Organized, consistent
- Demonstrating love and concern for the child
- Warm, stable, fair
- Persistent, committed to keeping the child through the hard times and challenging behaviors
- Endurance
- Thick-skin, able to cope with challenging behaviors
- Empathy for the child and the biological family (understanding how much the child has gone through)
- Parenting style that is neither too loose nor too harsh
- Helping to support normalcy for children, for example, allowing youth in care to attend sleep-overs, get a job and hang out with friends
- Treat kids in their care the same way they would treat their own children

A qualitative study of former foster children has also contributed to our understanding of critical foster parent qualities including (Randle, 2013):

- Parents that made them feel genuinely wanted; being treated as part of the family
- Families with a genuine desire to help children and aren't in it for the money
- Good listeners and communicators
- Those that have previous experience with children
- Show flexibility in their approach, but also are able to maintain appropriate boundaries
- Particularly for teens, feeling like they could express their opinions and have some degree of say or control over their lives

## Needed Competencies to Foster Successfully

Along with foster parent personal qualities and characteristics, a review of the literature and stakeholder feedback also revealed critical competencies needed to foster successfully including: (Buehler, C. et al., 2006)

- Safe, secure and nurturing care environment

- Promoting educational attainment and success
- Meeting physical and mental health care needs
- Promoting social and emotional development
- Valuing diversity, supporting cultural needs, and understanding cultural bias and the role it plays in working with children in foster care
- Supporting permanency plans
- Managing ambiguity and loss for foster child and family
- Growing as a foster parent, such as continued skill development
- Managing the demands of fostering on personal and familial well-being
- Supporting relationships between children and their families
- Working as a team member
- Understanding a trauma-informed approach to working with children

## Primary Motivations of Successful Foster Families

In addition to understanding the personal qualities, characteristics and competencies of successful foster families, we also reviewed the available literature to better understand the motivations of those foster families deemed “high-quality.”

- In one study, high-quality foster families described being “called” to the work, with many of these parents noting that their faith helped them cope during difficult times (Child Welfare Initiative, 2013). Stakeholders in Travis County also reported that the best foster parents were often those who felt a true calling for their work.
- These families also believed they could help make a meaningful impact in the life of the child, which would also help to break cycles of poverty and abuse.
- In another study, researchers noted that a child’s welfare was a central motivation of high-performing families, rather than monetary incentives (Randle, 2013).
- The state of Wisconsin launched a multi-year campaign after assessing motivations of their best foster parents. They found that the majority of these parents fostered for personal fulfillment or as a result of their faith (Kennedy, 2012).

## TARGETED RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

In this next section we summarize key strategies and principles identified through a review of available literature, research and stakeholder interviews that should be considered when developing a targeted, collaborative recruitment effort.

### Educate and Engage the Community

Experts emphasize the important role that community partners can play in assisting with recruitment efforts. Specific strategies to reach out to community groups include:

- Inviting organizations and businesses to information sessions to share about the specific community need related to foster families.

- Spending quality time in the community to establish relationships and build trust. Talk in specifics about the types of kids that need homes and how community members can help.
- Utilizing data. When possible share zip code-specific data during neighborhood outreach, making it clear to community members of the specific needs. For example, in one county in Texas that has recently experienced significant growth in foster care recruitment, they showed the community a map which pinpointed the areas where children were being removed from, and where they were placed. It provided a powerful visual for the community.
- Reaching out directly to businesses and community organizations to discuss how they can get involved.

## Engage with Families of Color

The 1994 Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) requires states to recruit foster homes that reflect the diversity of children in need of care. While federal law prohibits agencies to slow time to placement to match a child with families of similar race or ethnicity, a number of targeted recruitment initiatives across the country are being used to recruit families that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of kids. This may be particularly important to a recruitment initiative here in Travis County, given the disproportionate number of African American children in the child welfare system (23%) as compared with the general African American population in the county (8.3%).

Specific strategies include:

- **Take time to build community trust.** This is an important first step given that many communities of color have had negative encounters with the child welfare system (Public Child Welfare Training Academy, 2015).
- **Partner with existing foster families of color.** Encourage families to share their positive stories of fostering with the community. Families should be encouraged to participate in recruitment events, speak to their local community or faith based groups or help to respond to inquiries from potential foster families (Casey Family Programs, 2005).
- **Develop and utilize culturally sensitive recruitment materials,** as well as respond to inquiries in culturally sensitive ways.

## Specifically Recruit Foster Families for Hard-to-Place Children

The ability to clearly convey the need for foster homes for specific groups of children is a critical strategy related to targeted recruitment. Specific examples of how to put this strategy into practice include: (New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 2015; Public Child Welfare Training Academy, 2015)

- Explain the specific needs of hard-to-place children to families during information sessions and orientations. Then continue to explain the need during pre-service trainings, home-study sessions and placement conversations. For example, when speaking about sibling groups, stress the importance of sibling relationships and the potential negative impact of sibling separation.

- Include information on websites about the need for homes for specific groups of children, such as teenagers. Be specific by providing data on the number of hard-to-place children currently in the community.
- Educate families about the critical importance of keeping children in their home communities in order to ensure that children have regular access to their biological family, caseworker, and critical community services.
- Develop a pool of foster parents who have fostered hard-to-place children and who can share their real-life experiences.
- Be up front about the challenges and the rewards of fostering hard-to-place children. For example, caseworkers in Travis County note that there are many misperceptions of teenagers. While adolescents can be challenging at times, they are typically more independent and can be easier to care for than a younger child.
- Target special recruitment sessions for specific populations of potential foster families. For example, a child placing agency in Central Texas shared that they hosted a session for nurses and doctors at a hospital when they were working to recruit more families to care for children with primary medical needs.

## Communicate Clear Expectations

During our conversations with caseworkers and DFPS, several stakeholders noted the importance of providing prospective foster families with a realistic understanding of foster care. There are many myths circulating about foster care and negative portrayals in the media. In fact, a 2002 national survey of foster parents and child welfare agency staff found that a top barrier to recruiting foster parents was negative public perceptions of foster parenting. (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002)

Families need honest, accurate information to counter these myths. They need to learn about the rewards of foster care, but also develop a clear understanding of the challenges they will face. The state of Wisconsin focused on a recruitment message similar to the Peace's Corps message of "the toughest job you'll ever love." (Kennedy, 2011)

Some caseworkers noted they have also begun to emphasize to prospective foster families that a primary goal of fostering is family reunification. They are up front about this goal from the beginning, helping families understand the critically important role they can play in helping heal a child and serve as a permanency partner. In addition, families learn early on that they may need to adjust their own expectations and ways of parenting (if they are already a parent) to be able to support and heal kids who have experienced trauma.

## Utilize Word of Mouth Recruitment

A 2002 national survey of child welfare workers found that word-of-mouth recruitment by current foster parents was the best way to recruit new foster families (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). In addition, studies have found that foster parents recruited by other foster parents are more likely to complete training and become licensed. (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).

## Engage the Faith-Based Community

Faith communities are often seen by child welfare experts and stakeholders as ideal places to recruit foster families, given the emphasis on helping others as part of the ministry (Casey Family

Programs, 2014). Studies also confirm that individuals connected to a faith community are more likely to respond and follow-through with foster care.

- One study found that faith or support from a faith-based community was a key factor identified by foster parents as promoting successful fostering (Brown, 2008).
- A national survey revealed that foster parents who heard about fostering through large-scale media campaigns did not serve as long as those who had found out about fostering through a religious institution (Partners for Our Children, 2009)
- A community organization in Oklahoma found that 60% of inquiries from prospective foster parents who were part of a faith community completed the approval process, compared to only 30% in the general population (New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 2015)

When communicating with faith-based organizations, stakeholders we spoke with also emphasized the importance of conveying clear expectations. It's critical for perspective foster families to understand the importance of supporting not only children, but also the child's biological family, particularly when reunification is a goal.

### Give Prospective Parents the Opportunity to Get to Know Children in Care

Several child placing agency staff we spoke with noted that often potential families are understandably anxious about having a child placed with them. Child placing agencies recommended providing opportunities for prospective families to get to know the children in care. Through this process, one caseworker noted, children in care transform from simply being names on a page to "real" children. Ideas offered by caseworkers to help foster connections between prospective foster parents and children include:

- Take a tour or volunteer with children at a residential treatment facility
- Provide childcare during foster care trainings
- Provide respite care

### ENHANCED CPA CAPACITY

While the targeted recruitment strategies outlined above can lead to many new families considering fostering, child placing agencies in Travis County will also need to be prepared to support these additional inquiries. This is critical given that frequently cited barriers to recruitment nationally, including: (Casey Family Programs, 2014)

- Inadequate agency responsiveness to prospective foster parent inquiries
- Burdensome application processes
- Inordinate licensing and training requirements

Research of prospective foster parents has also found that up to 50% of families will drop out of the process before a child is placed in their home (Casey Family Programs, 2014).

During our interviews with child placing agency staff, we asked what support they would need to manage new families. The most common response was additional staff capacity to respond to inquiries, conduct home studies, provide foster parent training and case-manage families once they are fostering children.

At least one child placing agency noted that they are already struggling with some capacity constraints, given a higher than usual volume of new inquiries, and as a result are not as engaged in recruitment efforts at this time.

## BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

While enhanced child placing agency capacity and targeted recruitment strategies can aid in initial recruitment efforts, foster families need ongoing support from the community to be successful in their new role. In fact, child welfare literature emphasizes that foster parent retention is an important aspect of recruitment. Retention efforts are particularly crucial given that studies have found that as many as 60% of foster families will quit before the end of their first year of service (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2005; Child Welfare Initiative, 2013).

While the reasons behind the low retention rates of foster parents are complex, our interviews and a review of the existing literature revealed several critical types of support that could make a difference in foster family recruitment and retention.

Creating a system whereby community organizations and community members could learn about and provide these support opportunities would send a critical message to the community that while, “not everyone can be a foster parent, everyone can support them.” (Public Child Welfare Training Academy, 2015)

### Transportation

Transportation was frequently cited by community stakeholders as a major challenge for foster families. Children must frequently be transported to regular court-ordered visits to their biological families. In addition, many foster children also have regular and frequent appointments in the community for necessary medical and mental health needs.<sup>8</sup> The sheer number of these visits can be a major challenge for families, particularly working parents. Some prospective foster parents are forced to say no to having a child placed in their home due to a lack of assistance. For existing foster families, the transportation challenge can be a significant source of stress and may result in families who are unable to continue serving as foster parents.

Transportation challenges also impact CPS caseworkers. Often CPS caseworkers are called to provide transportation support when foster families are unwilling or unable. This can be challenging for caseworkers, given their high caseloads. In addition, when kids are placed outside of the county due to shortages of foster homes, it makes transportation requirements even more challenging.

### Respite Care

In addition to transportation, respite care was also a frequently cited area of need for foster families. Respite care is seen as critical for families to avoid burn-out.

- Research conducted on adoption respite care has found that respite care helped improve family relationships, reduce parental stress and prevent adoption disruptions (Adopt USKids, 2013).
- The National Foster Parent Association recommends that foster families receive at least two days per month of planned respite care (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2008).

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<sup>8</sup> Medicaid transport is available in some cases, children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult (CPS Caseworker Focus Group).

- Several child placing agencies in Austin noted that while they prescribe respite care to their families, it has been extremely difficult to find families willing to care for kids in this way.

## Foster Family Support Networks

Research studies have found there is a significant relationship between having a strong parental support network and placement stability (Casey Family Programs, 2014). Additionally, Travis County stakeholders stressed the importance of foster families being connected to a regular network of support. While faith-based communities are often natural sources of support, other networks and programs that can provide families with the time and space to learn from other parents and share experiences can also be valuable.

## Child Care Support

Community stakeholders also noted that it would be valuable to have a pool of childcare workers trained to care for kids during foster family support group meetings, as well as during ongoing foster care training programs.

## Donations

Child placing agency staff offered a number of ideas for how community members and businesses could support foster families and children in care through monetary and in-kind donations, including:

- Diapers, formula, milk bank donations
- Summer camps for children and youth
- Driver's license classes and license fees for teenagers
- First job interview suits

## Increased Mental Health Services

We also heard from stakeholders who emphasized the need for more intensive mental health services and supports for kids in care. Some stakeholders said they believed families would be more likely to foster children with intensive needs if they knew they had access to resources and services when faced with challenges. National data has suggested that between 40-80% of children entering care have significant behavioral challenges. However, only about half of children receive mental and behavioral health services (Policy Lab, 2009). Lack of services to children in care is particularly concerning given the fact that behavioral problems are a primary cause of placement instability (Policy Lab, 2009).

## Foster Parent Training

In addition to community-based mental health services, there are also a number of evidence-based therapeutic parent training programs designed to help provide parents with the tools and strategies needed to promote positive behaviors and help children heal from the trauma they've experienced. Some stakeholders suggested that existing licensed foster care providers could take care of harder to place children if they had more training and community support services to equip them.

In Travis County many child placing agencies and foster parents have been trained in Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) through the Travis County Collaborative for Children. An evidence-based model of care developed by Texas Christian University Institute of Child

Development and listed on the California Clearinghouse, it has been at the forefront of a movement to bring a consistent, trauma-informed language and way of working with children to the foster care system in Texas. TBRI training will continue for partners in the collaborative at least through 2017. Some partner staff are going on to become TBRI educators who are authorized to deliver training to parents and staff, thereby building a sustainable and scalable trauma-informed training methodology.

Pathways to Permanence 2 is a new training and engagement initiative within DFPS Region 7, designed to improve caregiver resiliency, knowledge and commitment, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for kids. Through a grant from the federal government, DFPS will be providing Pathways to Permanence 2 trainings to randomized cohorts of foster families across Region 7, including in Travis County. Cohorts that include caregivers from child placing agencies, kinship placements and DFPS foster families will meet weekly for training while concurrently developing relationships with each other. The program is anticipated to launch in the fall of 2016, and DFPS will participate in rigorous evaluation to examine its effectiveness.

Stakeholders indicated that cultural awareness and sensitivity training is equally important in promoting the healing and wellbeing of children in foster care. According to the DFPS data reviewed, approximately 50% of children removed from homes in Travis County are placed outside of the county. Half of those are then placed beyond any contiguous county. In these cases, the cultural and social norms of the foster family that the child is placed with is very likely to be different than – and in some cases vastly different than – their home environment. Stakeholder feedback indicates that training foster families on the development of a healthy racial and ethnic identity, the history of oppression, and how to work in a respectful and culturally sensitive way with impoverished families will increase a child's ability to successfully transition back to their homes and communities when they are reunified with family or fictive kin.

## Existing Initiatives and Potential Partners

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### PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN - ORIENTATION SESSIONS

Partnerships for Children is a nonprofit organization focused on providing Child Protective Services' caseworkers with the resources they need to better serve children in care. During the spring of 2016, they began worked closely with DFPS and Child Protective Services on the development of updated foster care recruitment and orientation materials. They contracted with Fostering Hope Austin and developed a variety of materials including:

- Video
- PowerPoint slides
- Handouts

Currently these new materials are being used during the monthly orientation session at the CPS offices in Austin. Partnership for Children also developed and implemented a train-the-trainer model to ensure that all child placing agencies and CPS staff who would be involved in presenting the orientation materials were adequately trained and supported. During the spring, facilitators from Fostering Hope Austin co-facilitated the orientation with CPS staff. The eventual goal is for child placing agencies and CPS staff to jointly conduct the orientation sessions. In addition, Partnerships for Children recently received a grant from Impact Austin to continue to expand recruitment and orientation efforts in the community. Partnerships for Children is also working to expand its website with resources and information to aid recruitment efforts.

## THE CENTER FOR PREVENTION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT - RECRUITMENT USING CONSUMER ANALYTICS

The Center, located within Cook Children's Hospital in Fort Worth, is led by Dr. Dyann Daley and addresses child abuse and maltreatment in the community. One of their current initiatives focuses on foster and adoptive recruitment using consumer analytics. They are partnering with DFPS to obtain data on current foster and adoptive care households. They are also partnering with Buxton and Co., a consumer analytics company, to create a profile of these foster and adoptive families in Texas. By learning more about these families, they are able to identify common characteristics, such as where they tend to shop, what they do in their free time, what areas they live in, etc. For example, during the pilot phase they learned that foster and adoptive families are more likely to regularly attend health clubs and sporting events. Using this data, they are creating maps with consumer-driven marketing data to show the geographic location of where potential families may live, based on buying and consumption patterns. Businesses and other community organizations can then be targeted for outreach and marketing efforts.

## FOSTERING HOPE AUSTIN

Fostering Hope Austin is a network of church foster and adoption ministries in the Austin area. Over the last 10 years, Fostering Hope Austin has sponsored an annual conference that is intended to serve couples and singles exploring adoption and foster care and post-adoptive families. Child placing agencies are invited to attend and provide information about their organizations and opportunities to be involved in fostering in Austin and the surrounding area. In addition, Fostering Hope Austin has partnered with Partnerships for Children to develop the new recruitment and orientation materials and facilitated the revised CPS foster family orientation session referenced above. Looking to the future, Fostering Hope Austin envisions hosting community-wide sessions to inform and engage attendees on the importance of fostering.

## OUR COMMUNITY OUR KIDS - PALO PINTO RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

Palo Pinto County had a significant shortage of foster families to care for children who had been removed from their homes. ACH Child and Family Services, working in collaboration with three contracted child placing agencies, initiated a recruitment effort to build the capacity of the region to care for children close to home. Initially, ACH scoped a traditional marketing campaign designed to build awareness through multi-media distribution of information. However, based on an analysis of cost benefit, the organization decided to instead hire a full-time recruitment coordinator who initiated a recruitment campaign based on activities similar to successful grassroots political campaigns.

The work began with a gap analysis to understand the need for foster families in the area. Using the information gleaned through the gap analysis, ACH arranges and attends 2 community meetings per month at a wide variety of organizations – rotary clubs, school PTA meetings, chamber of commerce meetings, early childhood events, etc. These are general information sessions and are intended to generate interest and build community ownership of the children in care. Topics covered, and depth of coverage, varies depending on the audience. They invite child placing agencies to attend, but will represent them if they are not able to.

Individuals who express interest in fostering are invited to attend a standing monthly information session held by child placing agencies and ACH. At these sessions, a brochure with a listing of area child placing agencies and a toll-free number that is answered by ACH is distributed. In addition to promoting the sessions through the community meetings, general advertisements

promoting foster care and these monthly information sessions are listed in the local paper and at the movie theater.

ACH covers marketing and meeting costs associated with this initiative and then the CPAs cover their own increased capacity to serve new families including training, home studies, etc.

## CAREPORTAL

The CarePortal is a nationwide online tool, developed and hosted by the Global Orphan Project, for connecting congregations with child protective service case managers and child placing agencies to meet the needs of children in foster care and kinship care. Through the system, child welfare professionals from participating agencies are able to input a need and the system generates requests to churches based on their proximity to where the need is located. Need can be input in three tiers:

- Tier 1 represents **physical investments** of cash, goods or services to stabilize the environment of the child and/or caregivers.
- Tier 2 represent **relational opportunities** for the church to mobilize, strengthen and support families and/or youth. These opportunities can come in the form of programs, mentoring, tutoring, or simply helping with daily-life tasks like babysitting or helping with transportation.
- Tier 3 represents needs requiring churches to **welcome strangers into their homes**. This includes partnering with preventative initiatives, developing resources for youth in these programs, or working alongside organizations that license foster families and adoptive homes.

## PLACEMENT RECRUITMENT COLLABORATIVE

The Placement Recruitment Collaborative is a new initiative, led by the DFPS Region 7 office, that is intended to strength the relationship between CPS and private child placing agencies and increase the number of children who are successfully placed close to home. Still in the planning stages, the collaborative has had one meeting as of the time of this report. The two primary activities that are planned for the future include:

- Presentation staffing during which children in care that are hard to place are presented in a more holistic way, rather than just through the common application information, to all child placing agencies, with the intent of finding a placement in an appropriate foster family.
- Profile development during which cases of children in the region who have been in the system a long time, have experienced multiple placement disruptions or have been hard to place are reviewed with the intent of developing profiles that can be used to inform recruitment efforts both for general recruitment as well as individual recruitment for targeted children to get back to their communities of removal.

## WENDY'S WONDERFUL KIDS RECRUITER

Wendy's Wonderful Kids is a program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. Through this program, the Foundation awards grants to public and private adoption agencies to hire adoption professionals known as "recruiters" to find adoptive families for children who have been waiting for long periods of time in foster care. The recruiters employ aggressive practices and proven

tactics to find the best home for a child. An evaluation of the program found that recruiters increased the likelihood of adoption up to three times more than other recruitment methods.

In 2014, Helping Hand Home for Children received a grant from the Foundation and currently employs two Wendy's Wonderful Recruiters.

While this program is specifically focused on adoption recruitment, and employs child-specific recruitment strategies including family-finding, some of the tactics that recruiters employ may also be applicable to foster-family recruitment:

- Recruiters have small case-loads (12-15 children and youth) and are therefore able to really get to know the child and the individuals within their network. Similarly, a targeted foster-family recruitment initiative that employs dedicated grass-roots community recruiters would have the opportunity to build relationships with neighborhoods, stakeholders, and community organizations.
- Recruiters have found success in educating individuals within the child's network (including relatives) about adoption and the child's needs. Likewise, an important component of a targeted recruitment initiative would be helping to inform and educate the community regarding the need for foster-families.

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## Stakeholder Input

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- Stacie Campbell, Area Director, Upbring
- Melanie Cleveland, Division Administrator, DFPS
- Kristi Duck, Foster and Adoption Case Manager, Helping Hand Home for Children
- Sally Fussell, Foster Family Specialist, Safe Alliance
- Kori Gough, Executive Director, Partnerships for Children
- Grace Lindgren, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter, Helping Hand Home for Children
- Stephanie Holmes, Starfish Coordinator, DFPS
- Jessica Morales, Family Recruiter, Upbring
- Kaysie Reinhardt, Program Director, CPS
- Lindsey Stockton, Regional Director, Upbring
- Audrey Deckinga, Child Welfare Consultant
- Texas Flowers-Moffet, FAD & CVS Program Director, Region 7, DFPS
- Lindsey Van Buskirk, Region 7 Program Administrator, DFPS
- Linda Garcia, Director of Community Relations, Our Community Our Kids
- Megan Zellner, Foster Family and Adoption Program Director, Settlement Home
- Sheila Brown, Regional Director, Region 7, DFPS
- Tanya Rollins, State Disproportionality Manager, DFPS
- The Honorable Aurora Martinez Jones, Associate Court Judge, Travis County District Courts
- Julie Kouri, Executive Director, Fostering Hope Austin
- Katelyn Holt, Manager, Foster Care Initiative, For the City Network
- Dyann Daley, Executive Director, Cook Children's Medical Center, The Center for Prevention of Child Maltreatment
- CPS Caseworkers (Focus Group)

## Child Placing Agency Input (Survey Respondents)

- The Settlement Home for Children
- The Bair Foundation

- Upbring
- DePelchin Children's Center
- Arrow Child & Family Ministries
- Helping Hand Home for Children
- STARRY
- Circle of Living Hope
- Pathways Youth and Family Services, Inc.
- Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services
- Austin Children's Shelter

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